

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-10

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4058

INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 27005

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CH, CB, FR,

SUBJ: FRENCH VIEWS OF PRC SUPPORT FOR SIHANOUK

REF: A) PARIS 24933; B) PARIS 24959; C) PEKING 1129;

D) PARIS 25540

1. IN GENERAL DISCUSSION OF ASIAN PROBLEMS ON OCTOBER 15, QUAI DIRECTOR FOR ASIAN AFFAIRS FROMENT-MEURICE (F-M) DISCUSSED BRIEFLY -- AND SOMEWHAT RELUCTANTLY -- CONVERSATIONS WITH PRC ABOUT CAMBODIA. (F-M HAD ACCOMPANIED POMPIDOU TO PEKING AND WAS ONE OF PRINCIPAL FIGURES ENCOURAGING ACTIVE FRENCH ROLE IN ENGAGING PRC COOPERATION IN SEEKING SOLUTION OF KHMER PROBLEM.) F-M SAID THAT FRENCH EFFORTS TO ENGAGE IN DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE NEGOTIATED SOLUTION IN CAMBODIA HAD BEEN REBUFFED. PRC HAD REITERATED DURING POMPIDOU TRIP COMPLETE SUPPORT FOR SIHANOUK WITHOUT SPECIFYING WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT OR AGAINST WHOM. PRC (PARTICULARLY CHOU EN-LAI) HAD MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE PRC HAD NO GREAT ADMIRATION FOR SIHANOUK AS PERSON. WHEN QUERIED ABOUT SIHANOUK'S ALL ALLEGED MESSAGE TO POMPIDOU IN HANGCHOW ASKING FOR FRENCH RECOGNITION, F-M SAID THAT HE KNEW NOTHING OF SUCH A MESSAGE; HE HAD FIRST READ ABOUT IT

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RECENTLY IN THE NEWSPAPERS.

2. F-M'S REPORT REPEATS THEMES CONTAINED IN OTHER REPORTS OF POMPIDOU TRIP, BUT THERE ARE SUFFICIENT VARIATIONS AMONG THE ACCOUNTS TO SUGGEST THAT FRENCH ARE NOT GIVING US THE FULL STORY OF PEKING CONVERSATIONS CONCERNING CAMBODIA. SIGNIFICANTLY, NO ONE HAS INDICATED WHETHER OR NOT ANYONE FROM POMPIDOU'S PARTY SAW SIHANOUK OR PENN NOUTH. FRENCH RETICENCE COULD INDICATE THEY HAVE GOTTEN LESS SATISFACTION FROM PRC THAN THEY THOUGHT OR THAT THEY STILL HAVE HOPES OF WORKING OUT SOME SOLUTION THROUGH THEIR "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP" WITH SIHANOUK AND ARE NOT YET READY TO REVEAL ITS FORM. WE ARE INCLINED TO THINK IT IS FORMER.

IRWIN

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